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Letter dated 22 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea, Osman Saleh Mohammed (see annex), in connection with the new draft resolution on sanctions circulated to the members of the Security Council.

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 22 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

It has come to Eritrea's attention that a new version of a draft resolution seeking to impose "additional sanctions against Eritrea" has been circulated to members of the United Nations Security Council. In this latest draft, one permanent member, which is the principal driving force behind the anti-Eritrea campaign, has resorted to more crafty language. But this cannot hide the salient fact that the gist of new measures contained in the draft amount to punitive economic sanctions that will arrest economic development and cause severe hardship to the Eritrean people.

These measures include, among other things, (i) a plethora of prohibitive banking impediments, encumbrance of foreign trade transactions and "oversight" of all mining revenues, intended to paralyse burgeoning foreign direct investment in the country by rendering the business environment dysfunctional; (ii) criminalization and curtailment of the 2 per cent recovery tax that Eritrea collects from its citizens in the Diaspora through subtle requirements and indictment of Eritrean citizens (operative paragraphs 10 and 11); (iii) inspection of Eritrean cargo at seaports, airports and on the high seas and in transit by all States and "in particular States of the region" (operative paragraphs 7 and 7 bis); and (iv) application of travel bans and asset freezes on selected Government officials (operative paragraphs 8, 8 bis and 9).

These measures will not only impair Eritrean economic and social development and the livelihood of its people, but are also fraught with dangerous security implications. The provision that would give a green light to powers that harbour belligerent intentions against Eritrea to inspect at will any cargo destined to the country will disrupt maritime traffic, curtail Eritrea's right of innocent passage, and otherwise sanction and embolden encroachment on its sovereignty by its adversaries. Surely, this provocative provision cannot promote regional peace and stability.

The travel ban on selected Government officials is primarily designed to reinforce the image of a "pariah State" that Eritrea's enemies have been peddling for ulterior political motives. The current list is a reduced version of what Ethiopia had cobbled earlier and curiously adds a senior official who is not even mentioned in the report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea.

There are malignant procedural and substantive ramifications in the efforts under way that warrant profound scrutiny. To begin with, Eritrea is still waiting for a response from the Security Council to its request that the Head of State, President Isaias Afwerki, address the Council on Eritrea's views and initiatives for peace, stability and economic cooperation in the Horn of Africa.

Secondly, despite Eritrea's comprehensive submissions, the whole drive to punish Eritrea, and indeed the current draft resolution, continues to be based on unfounded but gross accusations of Eritrea's "destabilizing regional role" and support to "terrorist acts" etc. In this regard, Eritrea wishes to underline the following:

1. Within the context of the Qatari mediation, Eritrea has taken positive and constructive steps to resolve its problems with Djibouti. It has

conscientiously refrained from reacting to Djibouti's repeated provocations and hostile campaigns. It remains strongly committed to the Qatari initiative which it fully trusts will lead to the resumption of friendly relations between the two neighbourly countries.

2. On Somalia, Eritrea reaffirms, for the umpteenth time, that it does not favour one side against the other. As it clearly demonstrated in its "response" and as even the report of the Monitoring Group substantiates (at least for the period after resolution 1907 (2009)), it does not provide military or financial support for Al Shabab, an organization that is hostile to Eritrea's secular Government. In regard to the Transitional Federal Government, it is now obvious that it is not Eritrea, but others, who trumpet their recognition of the Transitional Federal Government as the legitimate Government, that are actively working to undermine and weaken it. Over the past two years, Eritrean officials have repeatedly met with Transitional Federal Government representatives, as the Eritrean position remains that the only way forward in Somalia is a Somali-owned inclusive political process.

3. On the issue of terrorism, Eritrea wishes to bring to the attention of the Security Council its track record in genuinely and successfully fighting terrorism and extremism, which pose a threat to its harmonious society and socio-economic development. That is why Eritrea finds extremely offensive any attempt — for which no evidence has been or can be presented — to associate it with terrorism. These accusations, such as the African Union summit bomb plot of January 2011, the recent Kenyan allegations of arms shipments to Baidoa and the earlier Ethiopian charges of weapons deliveries to Kismayo and the deployment of 2,000 Eritrean troops in 2006, are false and will be proven to be false.

4. In stark contrast to its busy and hasty consideration of Eritrean views and actions, the Security Council continues to maintain (over several years) a deafening silence of Ethiopia's blatant violation of international law and its occupation of sovereign Eritrean territory, acts that constitute a clear threat to regional peace and stability.

In view of all these realities and in the interests of justice and peace, the Government of Eritrea calls on the Security Council:

(i) To act with neutrality, impartiality and fairness as it discharges its functions in the maintenance of international and regional peace and security;

(ii) To annul resolution 1907 (2009) and all its sequels on the basis of a just and fair appraisal of the realities on the ground;

(iii) To take resolute measures to bring Ethiopia into compliance with international law and relevant Security Council resolutions.

I wish to remind you that Eritrea still awaits a positive response to its request for the Eritrean President to address the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Osman **Saleh**
Minister